

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Very little is officially known about Shakespeare; but scholars have pieced together a reasonably comprehensive picture of his life from his marriage to Anne Hathaway in 1582 to his Christenings of his 3 children. And most reputable critics ascribe to him the authorship of the major portion of thirty eight of the world's most respected plays several excellent poems, and some 154 sonnets.

William achieved success largely on his own. He apparently never attended college. Successive purchases and sales of agricultural products and parcels of land near Stratford must have provided Shakespeare with greatly increased capital, which, when reinvested paid him steady income for many years. This gave him the freedom and time to concentrate on his first loves: acting and writing.

In 1594-1595 William performed before Queen Elizabeth and his name became widely recognised. Shakespeare grew in public stature when he became one of the owners of London's Globe Theatre in 1599.

For Study, Shakespeare's works can be divided into six separate, somewhat chronological sections; Early works, Major Histories, The problem plays, Tragedies, The Roman Plays, and The Late Romances. His comedies seem to be interspersed throughout these divisions.